

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-22 are pending with Claims 1, 14, and 22 being independent. Claims 1-10, 12-15, and 22 have been amended. Support for the claim changes can be found in the original disclosure, for example in Figures 3 and 4 and the corresponding text in the specification, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Requested Action

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Formal Rejection

Claims 1, 14, 15, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, because the correspondence between the claimed protuberance and a corresponding structure in the specification and drawings is unclear.

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, Claims 1, 14, 15, and 22 have been amended to change “protuberance” to --projection--, which corresponds, but is not limited to the projecting part 28 or projecting part 29 shown in Figure 4 of the application. Since Applicants have now provided the required correspondence between this claimed feature and an element disclosed in the specification, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Substantive Rejection

Claims 1-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,216,952 (Mou) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,844,730 (Aikawa et al.).

Response to Rejection

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, independent Claims 1, 14, and 22 have been amended. Applicants submit that as amended, Claims 1, 14, and 22 are allowable for the following reasons.

Claim 1 relates to an image reading apparatus for reading an image of a document, comprising an image reading unit configured to read the image of the document, an illuminating unit configured to illuminate the document, a plurality of mirrors configured to reflect light from the document, and a housing configured to support the plurality of mirrors, the housing including a mirror supporting part. Claim 1 also recites that at least one of the plurality of mirrors comprises a curved reflecting mirror surface.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the mirror supporting part includes a hole for at least one of the plurality of mirrors.

Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that the curved reflecting mirror surface of the at least one of the plurality of mirrors has two longitudinal ends and two lateral edges.

Claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the at least one of the plurality of mirrors comprises first and second longitudinal portions, each positioned adjacent one of the longitudinal ends of the reflecting mirror surface and being contiguous therewith so as to extend therefrom.

In addition, Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the at least one of the plurality of mirrors comprises a projection, separate from the reflecting mirror surface, positioned adjacent

one of the lateral edges of the reflecting mirror surface, and projecting into the hole of the mirror supporting part, and disposed at a position corresponding to a reference axis of the curved reflecting mirror surface.

And, Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the reflecting mirror surface, the first and second longitudinal portions, and the projection are integrally formed as part of the mirror.

In contrast, the citations to Mou and Aikawa et al. are not understood to disclose or suggest that at least one of the plurality of mirrors comprises a projection, separate from the reflecting mirror surface thereof, positioned adjacent one of the lateral edges of the reflecting mirror surface, and projecting into a hole of a mirror supporting part, and disposed at a position corresponding to a reference axis of the curved reflecting mirror surface, where the reflecting mirror surface, the first and second longitudinal portions, and the projection are integrally formed as part of the mirror, as recited by amended Claim 1.

The Office Action identifies the bending of the mirrors 73e, 73d, 73a, 75a, and 75 themselves in the Aikawa patent, when together, as being the previously-claimed protuberance. However, Claim 1 has now been amended to recite that at least one of the plurality of mirrors comprises a projection, separate from the reflecting mirror surface thereof, and positioned adjacent one of the lateral edges of the reflecting mirror surface. As a result, the bending of the mirrors 73e, 73d, 73a, 75a, and 75 themselves in the Aikawa patent, when together, cannot constitute such a projection. Therefore, these mirrors in the Aikawa patent also are not understood to constitute such a projection that projects into a hole of a mirror supporting part, as also recited by amended Claim 1. And these mirrors in the Aikawa patent also are not understood to constitute such a projection that is disposed at a position corresponding to a reference axis of the curved reflecting mirror surface, as further recited by amended Claim 1.

The Office Action identifies the recess 2291 and the hook 2292 in the Mou patent as corresponding to the previously-claimed contact portions. But these portions are not understood to correspond to the newly claimed first and second longitudinal portions for several reasons. First, the claimed longitudinal portions are part of the mirror, whereas the recess 2291 and the hook 2292 are understood to be positioned on the casing 221, which the Office Action identifies as corresponding to the housing supporting the mirror. Second, the claimed longitudinal portions are integrally formed as part of the mirror with the projection and reflecting mirror surface, whereas, as noted already, the recess 2291 and the hook 2292 are on the casing 221. Further, the Mou patent is not understood to show the projection recited by amended Claim 1 integral with the claimed longitudinal portions.

Since amended Claim 1 recites at least several features not understood to be disclosed or suggested by the citations to Mou and Aikawa et al., Applicants submit that the Office has not yet satisfied its burden of proof to establish a prima facie case of obviousness against amended Claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of amended Claim 1 be withdrawn. And because Claims 14 and 22 have been amended in a similar manner to recite a similar projection, Applicants submit that these claims are allowable for at least for some of the reasons that amended Claim 1 is allowable. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 14 and 22 be withdrawn.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable, due to their dependency from the independent base claims, as well as due to additional features that are recited. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the application is now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Any fee required in connection with this paper should be charged to Deposit Account No. 06-1205.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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